

# Trade Routes and Plague

Increased trade spread new goods across Europe. However, it also spread the worst disease in European history—the bubonic plague.

- Northern Europeans traded wool cloth, grain, wine, and silver for silk, perfume, and spices from Asia.
- Goods from Asia passed through the Mediterranean, and so did the bubonic plague. Rats, fleas, and people spread the plague along trade routes.
- In five years the bubonic plague killed a quarter of the people in Europe.



Top 10 Cities, 1200

Rank	City (Modern Country)	Population
1	Hangzhou (China)	255,000
2	Fez (Morocco)	200,000
3	Cairo (Egypt)	200,000
4	Pagan (Myanmar [Burma])	180,000
5	Kamakura (Japan)	175,000
6	Angkor (Cambodia)	150,000
7	Constantinople (Turkey)	150,000
8	Palermo (Italy)	150,000
9	Marrakech (Morocco)	150,000
10	Seville (Spain)	150,000

**A** In 1200 most of the largest cities were in Asia and Africa. In what region were the largest European cities?

## European Trade 1200–1360

**Main Trade Routes**  
 — By land and river  
 — By sea

● City in Hanseatic League  
 ● Other city

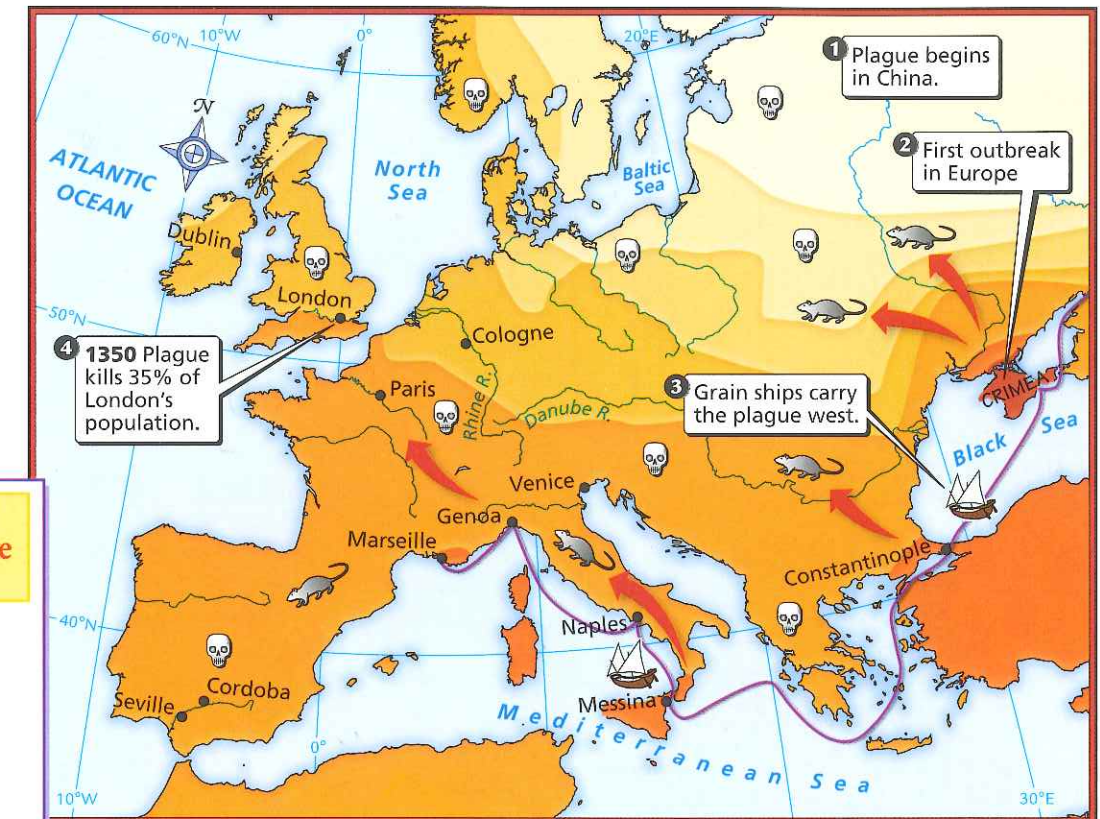
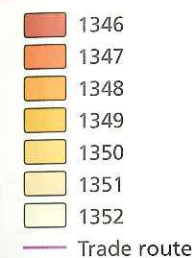
Map shows boundaries of 1360.

0 250 500 miles  
 0 250 500 kilometers



**B** As trade increased, European cities grew. To protect their trade routes, a number of northern cities formed an alliance called the Hanseatic League.

## Spread of Bubonic Plague 1346–1352



**C** A shipment of grain from Asia brought plague-infected rats to Europe. To see how the plague spread, compare the trade routes north from Italy on map B with this map.

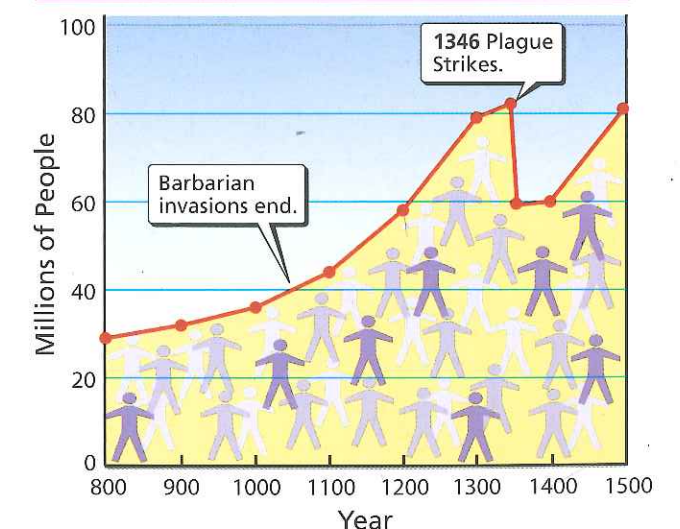
## How did the plague change Europe?

A disease as deadly as the bubonic plague can alter a society. After the plague years, surviving European peasants demanded higher wages and lower taxes. Nobles had to accept their demands because so few workers were left.



**D** Trade from the eastern Mediterranean made Venice rich. But trade also added plague to its overcrowding and poor sanitation, devastating the city.

## Population of Europe 800–1500



**E** Relatively peaceful times allowed Europe's population to rise—until the plague struck. How many years did it take for the population of Europe to recover?